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BOOKS

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"ROMANCE BRINGS UP THE 9'15"

GUY HAMILTON SCULL. Soldier, writer, explorer and war correspondent. Compiled and with an Introduction by Henry Jay Case. Duffield & Co.

THERE has just appeared a biography of the late Guy Hamilton Scull, who was soldier, writer, explorer and war correspondent, but, above all, a personality. Greater soldiers, greater writers, greater explorers, greater war correspondents, greater "gentlemen adventurers," have been quickly forgotten. Guy Scull possessed a certain quality, hard to define and describe, a certain compelling force, that is likely long to keep his memory green. It was something different from mere achievement. To illustrate, take his life as an undergraduate at Harvard. Other men athletically inclined "made varsity," as the expression was in the "golden nineties," with crew or nine or eleven, yet their fame was short lived and their names preserved only in the records. Guy Scull "made" his class crew and eleven and from that left an athletic record that has endured. It was personality. The present biography is a significent tribute. It is compiled by Henry Jay Case, but to its making have contributed Colonel James Barnes, Lincoln Steffens, Franklin Clarkin, Colonel Arthur Woods, Roger Derby, Carl Hovey, Eliot Wadsworth and many others.

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THERE are so many aspects to that varied and eventful life, so many angles from which to approach Guy Scull's personality, that a certain arbitrary selection is necessary. Mr. Case points out that Scull rarely talked of his adventures, in fact that he talked very little at any time. The few exceptions were the golden hours known to a very few when in a corner of the Harvard Club of New York or in some cafe tucked away in an obscure corner of the city, his mood right, and some one spinning a yarn that touched a hidden chord deep within him, there would come from him tales of adventure, short, powerful paragraphs, crammed with human interest, humor, pathos, parody, painted as no one but he could do it. Certainly no one but a man who had played a part in them could have held the attention as he did. Yet no one ever heard him use the first personal pronoun. He did not know it. This modesty and humility from a man who had lived through what he had was one of the things that drew others to him. Wherever he was there was always a group around him. For all his taciturn nature he liked the company of others.

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"'SKIPPER'S' tales," to quote Mr. Case, "were told in the drinking days when it wasn't breaking the law to put one's legs under the same table that held one's glass. His legs were long and he liked a big table, and while there was always a goodly crowd of worshipers sitting around it no one ever thought of using notebook or paper with a view to perpetuating those yarns. Perish the thought! The table held other things equally perishable. Those wonderful tales are gone. Only the memory of a man remains. Only those close friends, men in widely different walks of life, now realize what that loss means to contemporaneous history, romance and adventure. We who to-day would attempt to set down a story of his life have to rely upon those who played a part with him in this or that adventure. We acknowledge our debt to them for what they can remember of him and of what was told about him."

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AN earlier paragraph has referred to the necessity of arbitrary selection, and it seems the province of this department of the book section to stress the writing side of Guy Scull's life. Venturer though he was, he always wanted to write, more than he ever wanted to do anything else. The desire for literary expression was to him almost a passion. He could write. When he was a senior at Harvard the *Atlantic Monthly* accepted and published a story by him called "A Man and the Sea." It was simply the description of a man, alone in an utterly empty ocean, battling for his life. He had escaped from a shipwreck on a crude raft which sank under him, leaving him to fight it out by swimming until he went down. His first attempt as a war correspondent in the South African war jumped him into fame as a descriptive writer. One of his letters was used for classes at Harvard as an example of pure English.

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ELECTED class poet, Guy Scull never wrote the class poem. Instead he joined the Rough Riders. But the Spanish-American war did not come up to his expectations, did not conform with his Harvard dream of glory. "Instead of fluttering guidons, flashing sabers and wild charges through Spanish lines the 'Skipper' experienced nothing but the drudgery of camp life, the hard routine of drill and the misery of being left behind when part of his regiment embarked for Cuba." Then came illness and a slow convalescence. But with all its disappointments the war brought Scull into contact with as remarkable a body of men from all walks of life, East and West, as was ever brought together in one regiment—the Rough Riders, officially known as the First United States Volunteer Cavalry, Col. Leonard Wood commanding, Theodore Roosevelt Lieutenant-Colonel.

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THIS paragraph and the next are taken, not from the present biography, which considers the life of Guy Scull as a life complete. They give a contemporary glimpse of Guy Scull in his early adventurous manhood, being drawn from a contribution by Mr. Lincoln Steffens, then the city editor of the New York *Commercial Advertiser*, to the *Bookman* for March, 1900. "When he came to New York to report," wrote Mr. Steffens, "he had the stuff that makes a writer, but he seemed to lack the ability to 'get there.' Once when he was assigned to report the work doing on the yacht Columbia he was found writing verses behind a pile of lumber. To a remonstrance he replied that he wanted to go to the Philippines. He had been a Rough Rider, but having been left behind at Tampa, he felt the need of getting under fire and seeing men when they were fighting. The war in South Africa determined him. He had to go. He preferred to be sent, but he was going, anyhow. He was sent, and his first triumph was in reaching the front, where so many old newspaper men, backed by old newspapers and all their influence, failed.

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"ALL this Mr. Scull, the inadequate reporter of city trivialities, the man who couldn't 'get there,' arranged for himself. Once there, he turned in 'copy' which had the distinguished merit of putting the war on the ground, in air you can breathe and smell and under circumstances which you can see and feel. And this he did by sticking to his own literary way of laying bare his senses, taking on an impression and reproducing it exactly—fact, tone, color and spirit just as he received it, with great love for the word, phrase, sentence, and each article as a whole, as things akin to art. It is such men that force literature upon newspapers.

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SOUTH AFRICA in 1900; Venzuela in 1901. When affairs in the South American republic became critical the war correspondents were again called into action. *Collier's Weekly* had engaged Richard Harding Davis, but at the last moment something happened to keep Davis at home, so Guy Scull was sent in his place. One of the editors of *Collier's*, who was rooming with Scull, says: "This was where I got even with 'Skip.' The night before he left for South Africa I had casually asked him where he was going and he said 'South Africa' as nonchalantly as though he were headed for 'Jack's.' This night when he came home about 1 A. M. as usual and got out the old cello to play himself to sleep I asked him where he was going in the morning and he yawned: 'Oh, I don't know,' and I replied 'I do,' and he asked 'Where?' and I said 'Venezuela.' That was the only time I ever had the 'Skipper' guessing." So to Venezuela Scull went on less than twelve hours' notice.

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JAMES H. HARE, the photographer, tells the story of the voyage and gives a vivid picture of the man: "We were the only two passengers in the first cabin of the Red D Line steamer, and I remember the port captain bidding us good-by and saying: 'You two fellows have a private yacht to yourselves.' We boarded it in a blinding snowstorm and on the way to the dock cashed our draft for expenses at the bank, deciding to take the money in gold—in five, ten and twenty dollar pieces. I will admit that I was a little disappointed at Davis not going, he was such a delightful companion and of course was a most experienced newsgatherer, to say nothing of his usually immaculate appearance, while Scull was practically a novice and in those days, somewhat slouchy in appearance—but you had only to be in his company a short time to find out that appearances counted for little, and that he was a rattling good fellow, though somewhat eccentric. This was confirmed when he suggested that we wouldn't need to keep a detailed expense account. . . . I discovered later, when I came to know him better, that money meant nothing to him, that it was impossible for him to interest himself in it—but when I picked up a double eagle on the floor of his stateroom and discovered that he had at least $300 in gold in his trousers pockets hanging on a hook and the door open to any deck hand to enter I put up a protest that it was not fair to his room steward.

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"AFTER a few days out of New York we ran into warmer weather and Guy's peculiarities asserted themselves, this time in a new direction. He decided he needed a hair cut and asked me to act as the tonsorial artist, which I promptly refused to do—but this did not feaze him. He said 'Oh, well, I'll cut it myself,' and sure enough he borrowed a pair of scissors and hacked away at it himself, much to the amusement of the officers and crew of the ship. I felt a little mean that I had not consented to officiate when I saw the results, which can be readily imagined. But he was unperturbed. He had an old strap around his trousers, which were baggy and needed pressing, but when I would gently remonstrate on the looks of them he would pull the buckle up another notch and say: 'There, how's that?' and was happy and apparently oblivious of any shortcoming in his appearance. In fact, dress was about the last thing in the world to trouble him."

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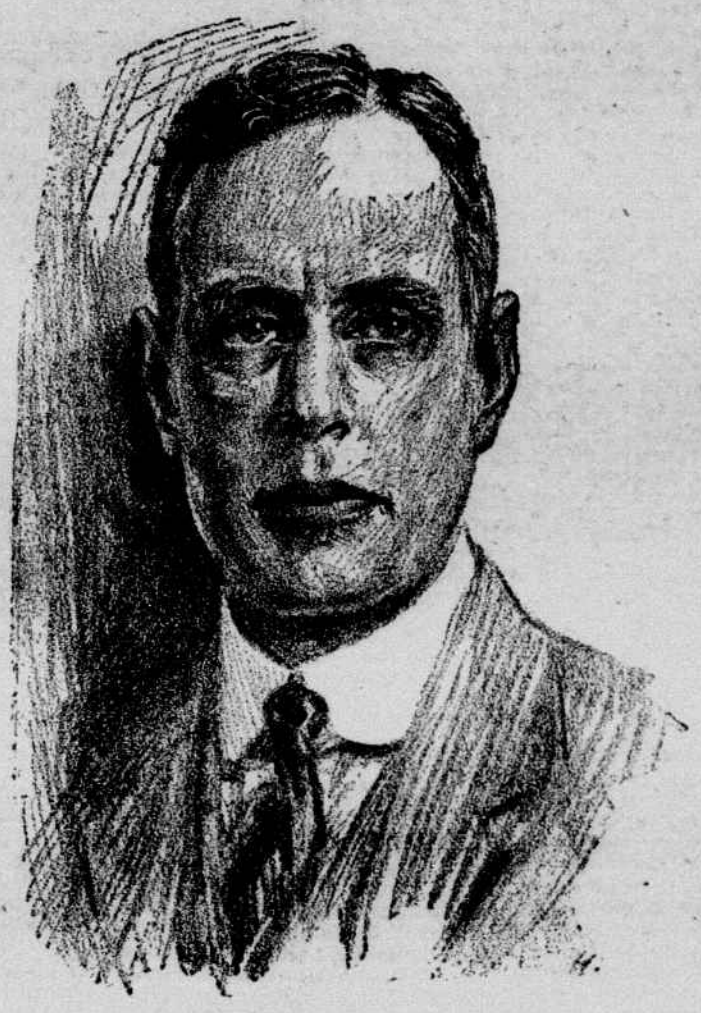
AFTER Venezuela, Guy Scull was in the Balkans in 1903; in Manchuria marking time in company with other correspondents in 1904 and 1905; and in 1906 in Russia studying the changing conditions in the great empire. Then, in 1908, came one of the big adventures of his life, the expedition to the Caribbean in search of sunken Spanish treasure. The Southern Research Society was the name given to the expedition. The ship was called the Mayflower, and the crew was made up of college men. It was planned as a summer yachting cruise in southern waters and ended in the total loss of the vessel in a West Indian hurricane, all hands being saved by a passing steamer on a third and last attempt to get a line to the derelict. It was an adventure equaling any sea yarn



Guy Hamilton Scull.

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